

**The President's Weekly Address**

*November 26, 2015*

Hi, everybody. In 1620, a small band of pilgrims came to this continent, refugees who had fled persecution and violence in their native land. Nearly 400 years later, we remember their part in the American story, and we honor the men and women who helped them in their time of need.

Thanksgiving is a day for food and football and for hoping the turkey didn't turn out too dry. But it's also a day to count our blessings and give back to others, a reminder that no matter our circumstances, all of us have something to be grateful for. Maybe it's good health, a new addition to the family, or a child taking a next step toward college or a career. Maybe it's a new job or a long-overdue raise. Maybe it's something as simple and as important as the chance to spend time with the people who matter most.

Of course, every American can be thankful for the chance to live in a country founded on the belief that all of us are created equal. And as President, I'm thankful that I get to see the best of America every day: the courage of our troops and veterans, the resilience of our families, and the basic goodness of the ordinary people who call this country home.

On this uniquely American holiday, we also remember that so much of our greatness comes from our generosity. There's the generosity of Americans who volunteer at food banks and shelters, making sure that no one goes hungry on a day when so many plates are full. There's the generosity of Americans who take part not just in Black Friday and Cyber Monday, but Giving Tuesday, recognizing that in the holiday season, what you give is as important as what you get.

And I've been touched by the generosity of the Americans who've written me letters and emails in recent weeks, offering to open their homes to refugees fleeing the brutality of ISIL. Now, people should remember that no refugee can enter our borders until they undergo the highest security checks of anyone traveling to the United States. That was the case before Paris, and it's the case now. And what happened in Paris hasn't stopped Americans from opening their arms anyway.

One woman from Pennsylvania wrote me to say: "Money is tight for us in my household. . . . But I have a guest room. I have a pantry full of food. We can do this." Another woman from Florida told me her family's history dates back to the Mayflower, and she said that welcoming others is part of "what it means to be an American."

Nearly four centuries after the Mayflower set sail, the world is still full of pilgrims: men and women who want nothing more than the chance for a safer, better future for themselves and their families. What makes America America is that we offer that chance. We turn Lady Liberty's light to the world and widen our circle of concern to say that all God's children are worthy of our compassion and care. That's part of what makes this the greatest country on Earth.

I hope that you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving, surrounded by loved ones and full of joy and gratitude. And together, may we all play our own small part in the American story and write a next chapter that future generations can be thankful for.

From the Obama family to yours, have a great Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:25 p.m. on November 25 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 26. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 26.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

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*Subjects:* France : Paris :: Terrorist attacks; Holidays and special observances : Thanksgiving; Iraq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Syria : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Voluntarism.

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